

Appendix 2: Text of letter sent by Chief Officer, Strategic Place Planning to Lorna Slater MSP, Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity and Iain Gulland, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer, Zero Waste Scotland and copied to Scottish Government, Office of the First Minister.

Dear Lorna Slater MSP and Iain Gulland,

Aberdeen City Council's support for a ban on single-use vapes

I am writing to you both with regards to a ban on single-use vapes. Aberdeen City Councillors, at their meeting of the Net-Zero Environment and Transport Committee on the 9th of May 2023 requested that I write to you on this matter. Following a policy review on the implication of banning single use vapes on the Council, I would like to use this opportunity to make you aware that Aberdeen City Council supports a proposed ban on the sale of single-use vapes.

The recent Zero Waste Scotland - Material Focus report estimates that 26 million single-use vapes were used in Scotland in the last year, of which an estimated 10 per cent were littered and more than half were disposed of incorrectly. There is increasing vape use amongst non-smokers including young people from Primary year 6 through to Secondary year 6. Single-use vapes and their packaging are increasingly being seen within litter in Aberdeen. An internal survey of regular litter pickers found that two thirds were picking up single-use vapes more frequently, and some communities have seen an increase of discarded vape products in their public and open spaces. Additionally, schools have problems with increasing vape litter around their buildings. There are concerns that the nicotine and battery chemical pollution and toxicity from vape litter would contribute to biodiversity loss. There is also loss of critical raw materials such as Lithium and Copper which is increasingly needed for the energy transition. Aberdeen City Council has recently been significantly affected by a fire at the Altens Materials Recovery Facility which may have been caused by a Lithium battery.

A local Trading Standards investigation showed that some shops are participating in direct and proxy sales of vaping products to under 18-year-olds. We are aware that there are social and health implications for under 18's and young people. A World Health Organisation publication in 2022 pointed out that the consumption of nicotine in children and adolescents has deleterious impacts on brain development, leading to long-term consequences and potentially leading to learning and anxiety disorders. As you would know, leading respiratory paediatricians have written an open letter to the Scottish First Minister expressing their concerns about the lung health of young people involved in vaping.

A ban on single-use vapes would reduce the likelihood of them becoming litter, potentially being a fire hazard and adversely affecting biodiversity, land and water resources in Aberdeen and beyond.

A communications plan is being developed by Aberdeen City Council targeting residents, schools, litter-pickers, waste management facilities and council staff with information on how to correctly dispose of vapes.